



**OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**

May 1, 2012

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Chair Navarro
Councilmember Ervin
Councilmember Reimer

FROM: Roger Berliner

RE: Chief Innovation Officer

As you know, I have written to the County Executive to suggest that our County install a “Chief Innovation Officer.” This initiative was the direct result of the “Shaping the Future: Adapting to Change” briefing on how our county could better position itself to attract “new economy” participants.

During that session, an early funder of Twitter and a representative from Google advised us that in their view our County needed to do more to embrace innovation. They specifically pointed to the wealth of data that our County possesses and how other communities are using that data to create economic opportunities.

A Chief Innovation Officer would do precisely thatand more. The Chief Innovation Officer would assist in putting the data our County collects to work for our residents: turning information into services through cutting-edge technology like mobile phone “apps”. He or she would engage a new generation of problem-solvers, our County’s most tech-savvy residents, to come up with new solutions to old problems.

As the attached articles describe, the City of San Francisco also has a Chief Innovation Officer, and one success their “CIO” has brought about is SFPark. SFPark is an app that provides a real time inventory of available parking spots for motorists, with the goal of reducing circling and double parking. The result is less congestion, cleaner air, and safer streets. San Francisco and Philadelphia, another city with a CIO, have both hosted “hackathons” – community get-togethers where digitally-engaged residents gather to delve into the cities’ data and develop apps that benefit the community and improve the area’s quality of life.

In short, I believe having a CIO would help put our County’s data to work for our residents, improve government transparency, advance our community’s quality of life, and put Montgomery County on the cutting edge of communities that foster entrepreneurialism and attract the kind of businesses that will propel our County into the future. Accordingly, I am asking for your support in putting \$150,000 on the reconciliation list to fund this position. (This figure was provided by the CAO.) The County Executive has indicated his support for this concept. I ask for yours as well.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Enclosures

Citiwire.net

New City Rx: High-tech Innovation Merged with a Role for Citizens

NEAL PEIRCE / APR 15 2012

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In our age of acronyms, you'll be excused if you can't define SFPark, SFStartup, SmartSF, EngageSF. They're all part of SFGov — or to be more precise, San Francisco city government's leap into a world of far-ranging innovations.



Jay Nath, appointed in January by Mayor Edwin Lee to serve as San Francisco's Chief Innovation Officer, is at the cutting edge of a new brand of urban governance: looking to citizen and business innovators to work with City Hall in devising ways for local government to function — and interact — in more efficient, economical, user-friendly ways.

Largely (but not exclusively) the new approach is driven by cutting-edge technology — “apps” on citizens' computers and mobile phones, fiber optic connections, ubiquitous sensors spread around town, and ever-speedier computing. But it's also competitive economics: ways for city government, competing for businesses and tax-paying citizens, to make itself an ever-more desirable place to be.

So consider SFPark. It's an app that provides a real time inventory of available parking spots for residents and tourists. The goal is to reduce circling and double parking. Result: less congestion, cleaner air, safer streets, and a clearer path for public transit. Drivers are encouraged to park in underused areas and garages. Prices on the installed street meters (currently 25 cents to \$4.75 an hour) are regularly adjusted to keep one or two spaces available on any block.

Then they're “parklets” — a “StartupSF” feature to reclaim and “green” public space, that was first conceived by a local studio, Rebar Art, that mixes art, design and activism. The simple idea: if you put quarters into a parking meter, in effect renting street space from the city, why

not rent the space for another purpose? So parklets, built out into parking lanes, are suddenly creating space that can be reprogrammed for people to relax, drink a cup of coffee and enjoy the urban scene. Business owners, expected to be chief adversaries, are now spending significant dollars to rent parklet space beside their cafes and restaurants.

The basic idea, says Nath, “is to engage the community, make sure it has information and can share ideas with us.” So San Francisco has been encouraging “hackathons” — a type of public consultation at which citizens and businesses are invited to suggest and think through designs to address problems the city faces.

Why go to all this trouble? Nath explains it’s to address “pain points” the city is experiencing. The new tech-cures range all the way from new software to tame the city government’s labyrinthine obstacles in licensing new businesses to improving the notorious mismatch of would-be riders and taxi cabs on San Francisco streets.

Why address “pain points”? In a way, it’s classic city marketing — to enhance, Nath says, San Francisco/Silicon Valley’s reputation as a business start-up capital, and then to retain the new businesses with superior city environment and quality of life. And to keep the tourists coming.

But expectations are running dramatically higher — especially among today’s app-friendly, data-addicted youth. Advanced data centers and networks are key. But the technology needs to include, and build, on intentional outreach to citizens and companies — and ways for city governments to become more transparent, citizen-responsive, than ever before.

San Francisco’s not alone in the scramble for cutting-edge innovations. New York, Boston and Chicago are also leaders, and often exchanging information with San Francisco. And Philadelphia is the only other city with a direct counterpart to Nath — Adel Ebeid, recently appointed chief innovation officer by Mayor Michael Nutter.

One expects more and more cities will be taking the same step, especially in an era when cities are more than ever neglected by state and national governments, “on their own” to compete in fiercely competitive times.

But San Francisco’s proclaimed ambition to be “the innovation capital of the world” has received a major boost from Jay Nath. In varied San Francisco roles since 2006, he’s authored or led a range of technology breakthroughs, starting with software to manage over 10 million “331” non-emergency calls, to create SFData which now has 60 apps in its showcase, and 2010 “Open Data” legislation which is requiring city agencies, the police included, to open up over 200 datasets to public view and analysis.

Gordon Feller, Cisco's director of urban innovations, is likely right in speculating that Nath will be seen in future years as a key driver of the open data revolution now building in world cities.

Feller is co-founder and leader of a yearly "Meeting of the Minds" that's scheduled at a Bay Area conference this October. Its focus, says Feller: to examine "San Francisco's secret sauce" of open source technology, citizen access and participation. Urban leaders from more than a dozen countries are expected.

The timing couldn't be riper.

For a high quality, hour-long webinar that recorded the San Francisco progress and Nath's innovations, here's the link:

<http://bit.ly/HIvhQV>

Information on the Meeting of the Minds meeting (borrowed from the CEO for Cities website):

Meeting of the Minds Event Announced

March 2, 2012

Posted by: Shayna

On October 10-12, global leaders will convene in San Francisco for Meeting of the Minds. Each year's Meeting is a premier leadership summit focused on the innovations that leaders in the built environment, infrastructure, transport, architecture, planning, finance and other key areas can use to grow sustainable cities. For two days, participants from across all sectors — public, NGO, and private — engage in lively discussions focused on "connecting the dots" linking buildings, energy and water resources, mobility, and finance.

Underpinning the 2012 program is a growing imperative: to make sense of the complex interplay between natural ecosystems and human infrastructure systems. The Meeting will look at how urban/regional decisions have become inextricably linked, and what elements of cross-sector partnership are critical for successful solutions.

Our Meeting will illuminate specific solutions and smart strategies that are making it possible to accelerate the emergence of sustainable cities around the globe — and create a smarter and more connected future for all. We'll feature the innovators who are solving critical problems, especially those from organizations that are

making smart investment choices. We'll identify breakthrough policies and practices that are already enabling our institutions and systems to become smarter and more resilient.

Follow Meeting of the Minds on Twitter [@meetoftheminds](#)

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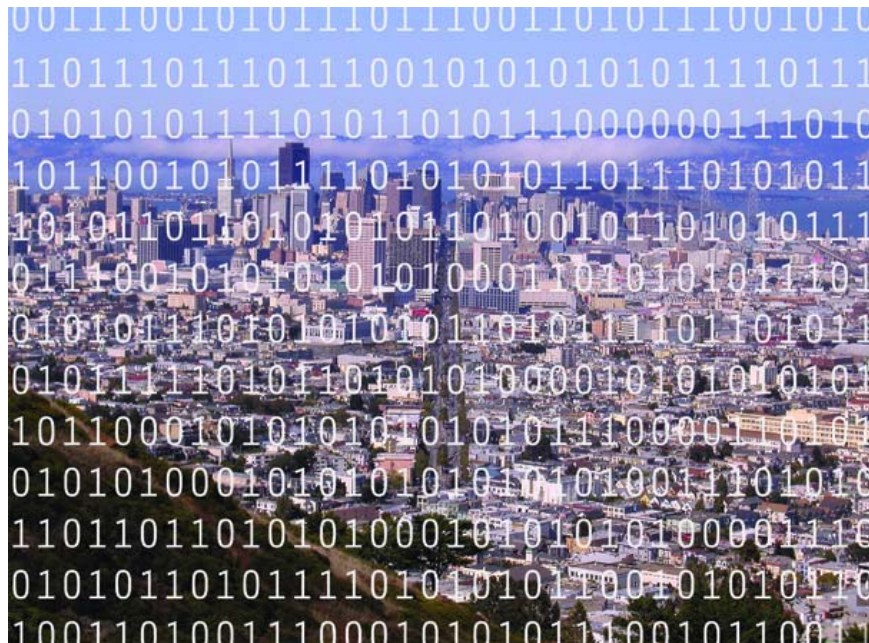
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THE BIG FIX

The Dawn of the Municipal Chief Innovation Officer

EMILY BADGER MAR 19, 2012 2 COMMENTS



There's been an odd paradox in public opinion around government over the last few years. Distrust of government, at just about every level, is at an [all-time high](#). Americans think their governments are broken, inert, corrupt. But, at the same time, we're witnessing the rise of the so-called [civic hacker](#), a growing army of deeply committed, tech-savvy city-dwellers who don't necessarily want to work *for* government, but who wouldn't mind spending a Saturday afternoon benevolently coding its data.

"There's this one side of the coin where people see just this disenchantment and negative view of government," says Jay Nath, the Chief Innovation Officer for the city of San Francisco. "But there's also this flip side where people actually believe that working with government, we can make a better solution and better improvements for our society."

Behold the innumerable [hackathons](#) and [unconferences](#), put together to develop apps for no reason other than that it's just *really hard* to catch a cab in San Francisco, or to find a bus in New York City. Just last week, Code for America unveiled a new project for [civic-hacking "brigades,"](#) because there are so many of these people now that communities could benefit from corralling them just as they once did volunteer firefighters.

"There is so much capacity that our communities have, that our residents have," Nath says, "there's so

A major shift in technology over the past few years has freed up the people who were once chief information officers to actually interact with residents.

much willingness to help work on these problems.”

Cities, though, are not inherently set up to handle all of these people, to let them into the fortress, to share resources with them and take ideas from them. And this is where Nath comes in with his curious title: Chief Innovation Officer.

There are, by our count, just two major cities in the U.S. that currently have someone sitting in this role, and they’ve both settled in within the past six months. Adel Ebeid stepped into the job in Philadelphia after working as the chief information officer for the state of New Jersey. Like Nath, he views his role largely as connecting city hall and all of its resources with a new generation of problem-solvers outside of it.

“We don’t want just an active hacker community that’s developing apps that aren’t really going to benefit the community,” Ebeid says. “Things need to come back and either enhance citizen engagement, enhance citizen awareness, improve digital inclusion.”

The birth of the municipal chief innovation officer job is a response to these two trends: to fundamental changes in technology that are revolutionizing citizen engagement, and to a cultural movement that is turning the data-dense inner workings of city halls into public challenges that are actually kind of a kick to solve.

“There aren’t that many of us right now,” Ebeid says, “but I can tell you we’re certainly an early testbed for what will become mainstream by 2015.”

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Barack Obama appointed the country’s first official chief information officer just after arriving in the White House in 2009. Vivek Kundra, himself a former chief technology officer for the District of Columbia, was responsible for carrying out the president’s open-data initiatives, in which [pallets of raw information](#) – on stimulus spending, government procurement, Census results – were turned over to the public on what became [Data.gov](#). Its municipal offspring are now commonplace. But the site, and the scale of it, were novel just three years ago.

“That was kind of an ‘ah ha’ moment for us,” says Nath, who was at the time working as the director of innovation within San Francisco’s department of technology. “It’s something we thought would be very compelling locally, more so than at the federal level, because people interact locally and they have more of a personal relationship to local issues, whether it’s crime or restaurants.”

Federal data doesn’t offer quite the same promise for creating tangible applications to everyday life, whether that’s for improving your local commute time, reporting a neighborhood crime, or tracking your nearest garbage truck. Ebeid doesn’t think the role he has now would work even at the state level.

“You’re so many layers removed from the people who consume your services every day” in state government, he says. “It’s very difficult to try to figure out how you can be innovative in the way you deliver services. But in a large urban setting like this, there’s nothing in between me and the day-to-day citizen, student or business, small or large.”

Ebeid credits one major shift in technology over the past few years that’s freed up the people who were once chief information officers to actually interact with residents. The chief information officer job traditionally involved actual infrastructure – maintaining the physical technology that houses and processes government data.

Now, though, much of that information has moved into the cloud. And this means a CIO job – whatever the acronym stands for – can focus less on infrastructure and more on innovation.

“Some cities now are realizing that what I really need is someone to help me advance digital quality of life for my city,” Ebeid says, “rather than just keep a bunch of servers warm and running in a closet.”

For Nath, this means spending his time working on the city’s “pain points,” the intractable problems like the [broken taxi dispatch system](#), or San Francisco’s notoriously cumbersome hurdles for starting a new business. The answer to all of these problems isn’t necessarily found in technology, but digitizing paperwork is a first step in just about any municipal innovation.

“Innovation is often coupled with and seen as technology, and I fall into that trap myself very often

because of my tech background,” Nath says. “But I do think that innovation is really about a new way of thinking, new approaches to old problems. It could be about how do you engage with your community better? And it may not involve technology at all.”

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Engaging the community – whether through a public-private partnership, or at a hackathon – is actually the easy part.

“What you see is an asymmetry,” Nath says. People on the outside of government are much more comfortable with the idea of collaborative problem-solving.

“On the inside, it’s a different story,” echoes Ebeid. “On the inside, you’re dealing with assembly-line processes that were developed in the ‘70s and ‘80s, a culture of ‘I’ve just got to get widgets out,’ rather than, what’s the value of what I’m doing?”

It took Nath a couple of years just to get people inside the San Francisco city government comfortable with the idea of open data.

“It generated quite a bit of fear,” he says. “In general, whenever you’re fighting the status quo – and that’s something that the mayor wanted me to do, really disrupt the status quo, change how we think and do things – there’s a natural resistance. It’s human nature, I think.”

But momentum is pushing cities in this direction, toward open-source, crowd-sourced solutions instead of top-down ones. It’s not just that the hackers are out there, clamoring for more data. At the same time cities across the country are running short on money; people in the community are offering up free labor, free ideas, free new ways of thinking about things.

Ebeid cites as one of his favorite projects so far something called the [Freedom Rings Partnership](#). Philadelphia has one of the widest digital divides in the country; 41 percent of residents there don’t have access to a computer or the Internet. This public-private partnership established training at 77 public computer centers across the city. More than a hundred people have already graduated from the program – and been given their own netbook.

So where exactly is the innovation in all that?

“The innovation is that we’ve figured out what is a real pressing problem for our city,” Ebeid says, “and we came up with a public-private partnership that solved the issue in the most expedient way at the lowest unit cost possible.”

Here, he’s describing innovation as a business executive might define it. And he insists that the CIO job in a city hall is really not all that different from what it entails in a Silicon Valley firm. Private-sector CIOs are focused on increasing profit, or shareholder value. CIOs in cities – all two of them, that is – are trying to figure out how to deliver better services at lower costs, and with tactics no one has ever tried before.

It just so happens, in the government context, that a lot of those ideas lie with people who don’t work in city hall at all.

“Sharing our data, we’ve been doing that for a couple of years,” Nath says. “Now it’s going deeper than just data. It’s sharing our people, it’s sharing our systems.”

Imagine how tradition-bound bureaucrats will react to *that*.

Keywords: Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chief Information Officer, Chief Innovation Officer, Local Government



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